

2007
wealth
OF
health
AWARDS

BUILDING HEALTHY, HAPPY FIRMS

*Nine area organizations
saluted for fostering healthy lifestyles*

Dixon Schwabl Advertising has made a fun and healthy workplace key to its corporate culture. The office includes a metal slide from the second floor to the lobby, windows that employees can open for fresh air and a padded "scream room" for employees to relieve stress.

The bottom line: a healthy, happier work force

By LYNETTE HAALAND

Nine area employers will be lauded next week for their efforts to foster a healthy workplace.

On June 5, these organizations will receive the Wealth of Health Award, presented by Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, Rochester Region and Rochester Business Journal. The award recognizes steps taken to encourage healthy activity and improve employee wellness.

Many local companies and non-profit organizations are implementing programs to foster healthy habits among their staffers, improve morale and increase productivity. These programs range from free gym memberships and yoga classes to health fairs and advice on food choices.

The Wealth of Health nominees were judged on employee involvement in such health initiatives, the creativity of these activities to reach specific goals, ongoing promotion of healthy lifestyles and measurable results. The honorees were grouped by size, determined by the number of full-time and part-time employees.

The event is scheduled for June 5, from noon to 1:30 p.m., at the Hyatt Regency Rochester.

Following is a closer look at each honoree's commitment to healthy living:



Harris Corp. RF Communications Division

Harris Corp. RF Communications Division knows a healthy employee is a happy employee, so it strives to promote physical and mental health both at work and at home.

"First and foremost we care about our employees and feel that it is important to invest in their well-being," said Elaine Spagnola, occupational health nurse at RF Communications.

The company, which has 2,000 local employees, manufactures secure voice and data communications products, systems and networks.

"We understand that health and wellness can impact productivity, attendance and job satisfaction," Spagnola said.

For decades the company has offered programs, events, services and discounts to

encourage employees to improve their health.

It conducts an annual on-site health fair that offers cholesterol screening, fitness assessment, balance and flexibility testing, body fat composition measuring, vision screening and strength assessment. Also, two days a month are dedicated to blood pressure screening and counseling.

The company has an on-site health department—which includes Spagnola—that can dispense over-the-counter medications. Annual flu shots also are given on-site.

The company also has a medical alert team, which is its internal emergency response team trained in first aid and certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, using automated external defibrillators and oxygen administration. Each local facility is equipped with AEDs and oxygen equipment.

Teaming with the American Red Cross, RF Communications offers wellness seminars it calls "lunch and learn." The one-hour seminars are offered on site and cover topics such as balancing work and life, challenges of parental care, coping with depression, understanding and improving self-esteem, and acting in time after heart attack signs.

The company also partners with the American Heart Association for "lunch and learn" sessions for heart-related health topics and for its healthy walk program. Healthy walk is a competitive team event during the month of June where employees are put in groups and log as many steps as possible with pedometers. There are prizes at the end of the challenge.

RF Communications is sponsoring 250 employees who are registered to participate in this year's JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge, a 3.5-mile run.

"The run is a great way for our employees to stay in shape and do it for a good cause," Spagnola said.

To encourage physical fitness and active lifestyles, the company also holds golf tournaments and events such as ski trips. It also sponsors company teams in softball, bowling and volleyball.

RF Communications subsidizes fitness center memberships and fees to five local clubs and periodically offers an on-site Weight Watchers program focused on eating smaller, healthier portions and increasing physical activity.

To encourage good health, the company's employee assistance program provides counseling on such things as substance abuse, financial difficulties, and marriage and family issues.



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Members of Lifetime Assistance's Chili Day Habilitation Services program work on strength training and exercises for development of fundamental motor skills.

The manufacturer also has an international travelers' wellness program to help many employees who travel extensively for work. The company offers travel wellness counseling, immunizations on site and travel physicals. All international travelers are provided with first-aid kits and anti-malaria medication.

The company provides an ergonomically correct environment in the office and manufacturing workplaces. It also provides extensive safety training and sends out its "Well Workplace" publication quarterly to employees.

"Harris RF Communications takes great precautions to ensure the health and safety of our people," Spagnola said.

Lifetime Assistance Inc.

Two years ago Lifetime Assistance Inc. started certifying fitness instructors to help motivate developmentally disabled clients to become more active.

"Individuals with developmental disabilities are increasingly leading more sedentary lifestyles. We needed to encourage more activity," said Michael Henderson M.D., medical director at Lifetime.

Lifetime serves some 1,600 children and adults with developmental disabilities and provides services for people with autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental retardation and neurological impairments.

The organization also wanted its 1,000 full- and part-time employees to become more health-conscious.

In summer 2005, Lifetime started a wellness initiative that involves training staff to become certified fitness instructors by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America.

"Educating and certifying senior staff as fitness and nutrition experts enables us to create a healthier atmosphere from the top of our organization downward," said Amy Mitchell, director of day services.

To become certified, 13 staff members took training courses for six months that combined classroom learning with exercise to learn about corporal health, good nutrition and the importance of physical activity.

Once certified, these staff members traveled to Lifetime's Brockport and Chili locations to train other staff.

"The goal of the initiative has been to empower the individuals who use Lifetime support services to become healthier people and gain awareness and enthusiasm for healthy living and exercise," Mitchell said.

The initiative also wants to help individuals become healthier through the development of individual support systems.

Monthly activity calendars include more physical activities and healthier selections for activities—such as nutrition instruction and exercises that are individualized and fun—than before.

"Our goal is that persons of all abilities at our Chili and Brockport locations will participate in two wellness-based activities daily," Mitchell said. "Adults in the program can take wellness classes focused on a variety of healthy living topics such as exercise, dance and aerobic workouts, shopping for wholesome foods, and cooking a healthy snack."

The exercise classes are successful, as shown by the high degree of enthusiasm.

"Many individuals ask when they are having class or remind the staff of when they have class, so the staff do not 'forget,'" said Jan Scotto, recreation therapist and certified instructor at Lifetime.

Participants express how much they enjoy the classes, and even individuals who often were more passive now are involved actively in exercise, Scotto said. "Many have expressed pride in themselves."

Several individuals are voicing their desire to eat healthier by asking questions and pointing out to staff when they make a healthier choice, Mitchell said. One woman is proud of the weight she has lost and enthusiastic about losing more.

The wellness initiative is in line with Lifetime's original goals. The organization was established in 1978 by a group of parents who wanted their developmentally disabled children to have opportunities to develop life skills, pursue their individual goals, and enhance their pride and self-respect as productive members of the community.

As a result of the initiative, many of the staff also have incorporated a healthier lifestyle into their day.

Paychex Inc.

A Henrietta employee credits Paychex Inc.'s wellness program with detecting a serious kidney condition that led to a kidney transplant last year.

"If it were not for the wellness program that Paychex offers its employees, I may have never known the serious condition my body was in," Paychex employee Timothy Parks said.

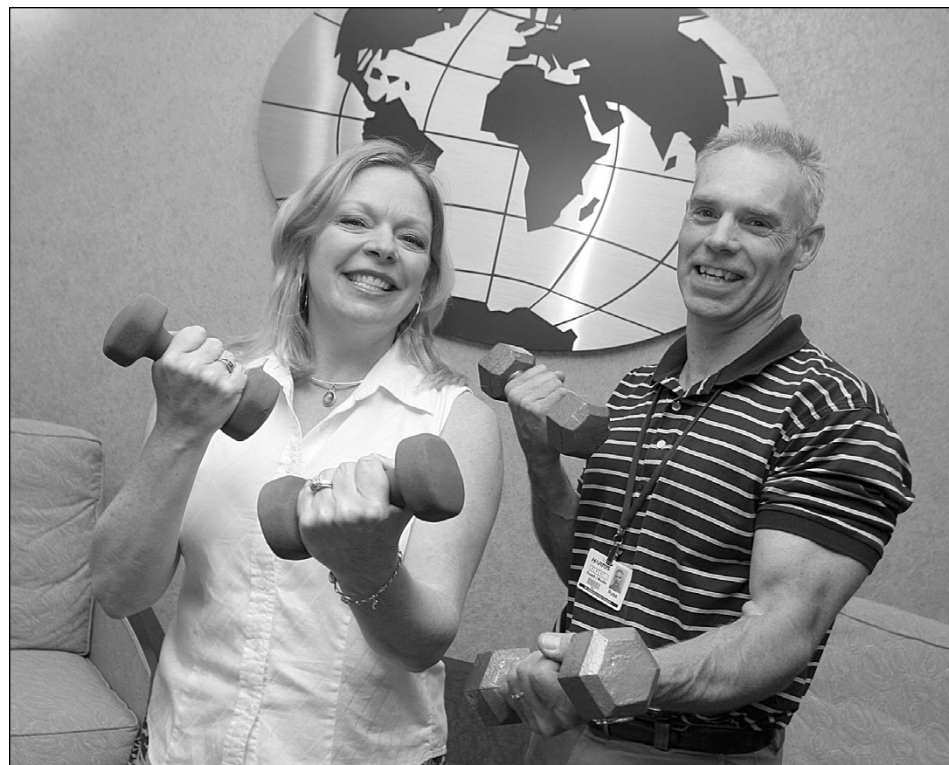


Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Members of Harris Corp. RF Communications' walking team take advantage of the programs offered by the company to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

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Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Paychex employees embrace healthy activities such as lunchtime walks with co-workers.

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That is one example of how Paychex's wellness initiative helps the 11,504 full- and part-time employees who work at the Penfield-based payroll-processing and human resource services and benefits outsourcing company, officials said.

Paychex started its wellness initiative a decade ago to enhance employees' engagement in their health, support healthful behaviors and create an environment that encourages healthy lifestyles.

Wellness programs are influenced by nationwide health risk data that show high rates of overweight people, need for stress management, inadequate levels of physical activity, high incidence of elevated cholesterol, excessive consumption of fatty foods, and inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables.

"These indicators give us plenty of opportunity to drive the wellness message home," said Bob Merberg, Paychex wellness program manager. "We're committed to giving all employees the education and tools to make healthier lifestyle choices."

Part of the initiative is free online health assessments provided by Paychex. It gives employees individualized feedback about their wellness strengths and identifies opportunities for improvement.

The company also gives free on-site biometric screenings, including lab tests related to blood lipids, liver and kidney health.

Paychex has health advocates—usually nurses—who help employees find a solution related to identifying and obtaining health care services.

Minnesota sales rep Richard Koetter credits the Paychex health advocate with lifesaving advice. He had a large, deep vein thrombosis in his leg. He saw his family doctor but was sent home with blood thinners and asked to come back in a week. At his wife's urging he called the Paychex health advocate who knew that the clot could move to his lung, causing stroke or death. The health advocate found an internist in the employee's hometown and set up an appointment that day. He was admitted to the hospital for a five-day stay with aggressive treatment. The clot was removed without complications and he went back to work immediately.

"I believe the nurse saved my life," Koetter said.

Paychex has other wellness perks. Employees have free access to a personal wellness coordinator who provides coaching and support as employees create personalized wellness goals and devise a plan of action.

To emphasize healthy lifestyles, employees who complete an annual health assessment and develop a health improvement plan are eligible for \$50 reimbursement toward a wellness-related purchase such as health club memberships, Weight Watchers fees, race entry fees or running shoes.

Paychex helps employees who wish to quit using tobacco by reimbursing their tobacco cessation program costs up to \$100 annually. Additionally, the company offers a reduced medical premium to employees who are tobacco-free or who commit to attempting to discontinue their

tobacco use.

Paychex offers health and fitness discounts at several local and national fitness clubs.

In Paychex' stress management program, participants complete an assessment to determine the stressors in their work and personal lives, identify strategies to manage stress, and discuss stress management resources available to them at Paychex.

"Even simple things to increase awareness of better health can make a difference," Merberg said.

Paychex food vendors have increased the healthful options, and the company has added nutritional information on its vending machines and in the cafeterias of its Rochester locations.

In a recent employee survey, 83 percent said they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with Paychex's wellness program.

"Paychex values its employees and demonstrates that value by supporting our employees' health. We also recognize that healthy employees make a healthy company," Merberg said.



The Friendly Home

Response was tremendous last year when the Friendly Home provided a free basic health insurance coverage individual plan for any full-time employee.

The non-profit organization did not want any full-time employee to be without coverage for financial reasons, said Emy Giacalone, human resources director.

"Health is at the heart of everything we do," Giacalone said. "We are an organization of people who rely on the well-be-

ing of our own bodies to provide the care for those entrusted to us."

The skilled-nursing facility has 415 employees and 202 beds, 14 of which are short-term rehabilitative/transitional care.

The Friendly Home works hard to provide a healthy work environment. Its wellness platform has three basic tenets: access to health and wellness services, education surrounding healthy living, and action in caring for employees and others.

"The Friendly Home's healthy activities are based on the belief that by taking proactive, preventative measures, individuals can avoid illness and remain healthy and productive employees," Giacalone said.

In another wellness initiative last year, the Friendly Home held its first "Tuition for Your Mind & Wellness for Your Body" event. The event is designed to educate employees about being proactive with their health and careers.

"Our auditorium was overflowing with people from all three shifts during the event," Giacalone said.

Sixteen outside and two internal service providers, including the employee assistance program, Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, Preferred Care and Greater Rochester American Red Cross filled the auditorium.

"Their displays, handouts, samples and demonstrations provided a fun, festival-like atmosphere for employees to learn about everything from safety in the sun to CPR to the latest treatments and testing equipment for diabetics," Giacalone said.

To boost activity levels, the organization participated in its first JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge last year. Sixty-one people participated in the physical preparation program prior to the event and 46 completed the 3.5 mile course.

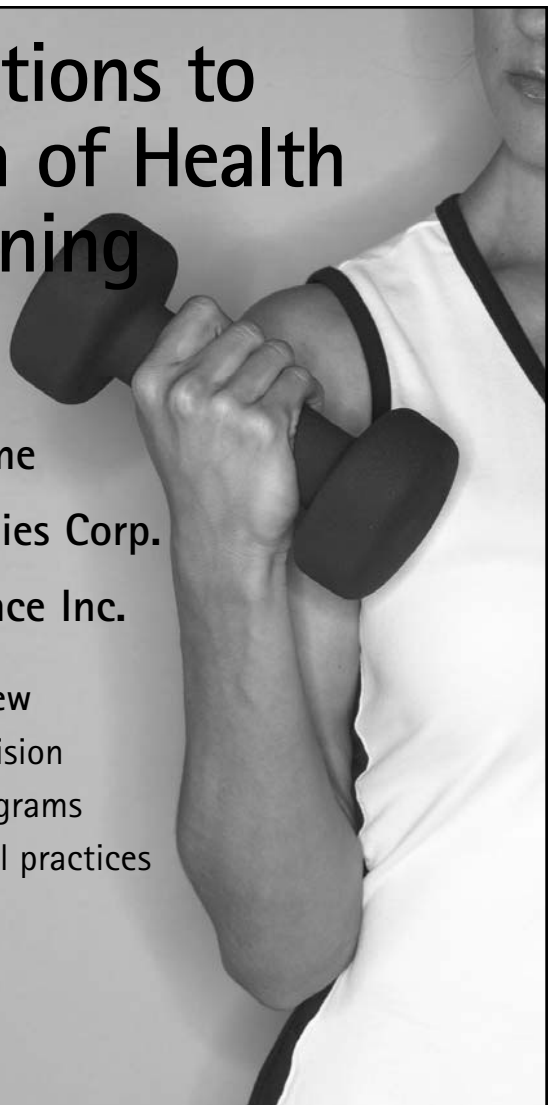
To help employees eat better, a full sal-

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Congratulations to our Wealth of Health award-winning clients!

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- Guardian Industries Corp.
- Lifetime Assistance Inc.

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Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

The Friendly Home offers a variety of wellness services to its employees, including free pedometers, smoking cessation programs, a weight management program and free annual flu shots.

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ad bar is offered each day in the cafeteria. The cafeteria also features a health information center that provides employees with a variety of wellness and nutritional information such as recipes and tips for healthy eating.

During Nutrition Month in April, and as the Friendly Home team prepared for this year's Corporate Challenge race in May, a captain's choice healthy lunch meal was offered each Wednesday with nutrition and calorie information listed.

The Friendly Home offers other wellness services, including free pedometers with the Excellus Step-Up walking program and smoking cessation programs.

The organization strives to publish wellness articles in its newsletter. Topics in "The Friendly Focus" have covered tips on those who work standing up most of the time and getting a quit coach for those wanting to break a smoking habit.

The Friendly Home's weight management program is conducted by a staff diet technician and involves 45-minute weekly sessions for nine weeks. The focus is on healthy eating, recipe modification, nutrition, exercise and support.

Last year the weight management program was extended to help those with particular health issues identified by their physicians. They are given free consultation services with the diet technician.

National Safety Month last June aimed to raise awareness on safety issues. Materials were available each day outside of the employee cafeteria covering everything from food preparation and storage to back safety.

The organization also gives annual free flu shots, and last year 53 percent of its staff received immunization.

"We try to make the flu shots campaign fun by offering each participant a lottery scratch-off ticket and an entry in a drawing for prizes such as iPods, DVD players and a television," Giacalone said.

Guardian Industries Corp.

Guardian Industries Corp. launched a football season competition last year that was hugely successful and resulted in employees at the Ontario County firm collectively losing 1,524 pounds.

"HealthGuard football" was a popular initiative: 282 of the 330 employees at the flat-glass manufacturing plant in Geneva were divided into 32 teams named after National Football League teams.

When the NFL teams would play each other, the Guardian teams also would square off. The Geneva teams competed on the number of steps taken, weight loss and other forms of physical activity throughout each week. One employee lost 80 pounds in the challenge.

There were prizes for the winners too—a choice of a year membership to a health club, tickets to a Buffalo Bills game and gift card at the Anchor Bar and Grill, or a weekend getaway to Niagara Falls with spending money.

"Competition and winning has been a part of Guardian's corporate culture since 1985, and physical activity, nutrition and education are fun ways to keep that competitive culture strong," said James Ward, assistant human resources manager at Guardian.

Although the company's culture has been rooted in exercise and healthy living for decades, Guardian recently has stepped up its initiatives.

"We feel that the health and wellness of our employees is important for their quality of life and well-being," Ward said.

Earlier this year, Guardian established a HealthGuard team of 13 employees across all levels of the company. The team meets bimonthly to discuss future wellness initiatives and then implements those ideas.

Wellness events typically focus on risk

factors identified through company health risk assessments. Guardian aimed last fall to increase the participation, and 268 employees took the voluntary annual assessments.

Guardian recently built an on-site fitness facility that is being used an average of 530 times each week.

"This was built because of the overwhelming interest in previous wellness initiatives and health risk assessments that we had over the year," Ward said.

The company also has an initiative called team up for fitness, or TUFF, which focuses on small teams of employees exercising three times a week for 15 minutes at a time for a period of 10 weeks in the on-site fitness center. Teams can be eligible for an array of prizes.

"We chose 15 minutes rather than the 30 minutes that is recommended by most health professionals because 30 minutes would likely intimidate our target audience. Many people have a fear of something new and we wanted to get as many people as possible to utilize the facility," Ward said.

Another Guardian program, Winner's Circle, recognizes physical activity over a 16-week period. Employees and their family members can participate to earn points for gift certificates by accumulating physical activity hours. For example, participants who exercise 136 hours over 16 weeks can earn a \$25 gift certificate, and the rewards go up from there.

The manufacturer also subsidizes several competitive sports leagues, including bowling, archery, horseshoes, basketball, softball, volleyball, golf and flag football. It competes in corporate basketball and volleyball tournaments against other Guardian plants in Michigan, where the company headquarters are located.

For a program kicked off this year, the company served employees healthy breakfasts in February with information on the nutritional content of what was served and on wise nutritional choices.

Last summer the company also introduced a labeling system for its vending machines. Healthy foods were marked with a green sticker to help employees make better nutritional choices.

"These wellness initiatives are ever more important from a business standpoint to keep medical premiums as low as possible without decreasing the benefits that we offer to our employees now and into the future in order to continue to remain competitive in the business market," Ward said.

LiDestri Foods Inc.

At LiDestri Foods Inc., the idea to pur-

sue wellness grew out of the CEO's concern about the number of young cigarette smokers in the company.

"And his concern about their long-term health and the impact on their families," said Cynthia Reddeck M.D., medical director for the LiDestri wellness program.

CEO John LiDestri approached Reddeck—his wife and a cardiologist—with the idea of making the LiDestri properties smoke-free. The company manufactures tomato-based and other sauces.

They discussed the concept of the workplace as a venue for encouraging healthier behavior and the impact that rising health care costs have on the business and the employee.

The discussion led to Reddeck accepting a part-time position at LiDestri to establish and direct a wellness program roughly two years ago. The program was started at the Fairport facility, which has 387 full-time and five part-time employees. Since then it has been established in the Fresno, Calif., and Pennsauken, N.J., plants where nearly 200 more employees work.

One of the first wellness initiatives was to address smoking.

"In January 2006 we announced plans to make LiDestri properties smoke-free," Reddeck said.

From Jan. 1, 2006, until July 4, 2006—the start of its "Independence from Smoking"—the company offered cigarette-cessation counseling sessions, support group meetings and referrals to phone quit lines.

LiDestri has documented at least 20 people who have quit smoking and many others who have reduced significantly the amount they smoke.

"It has been especially gratifying to have employees ... say 'thank you' for the smoke-free policy, because it gave employees who had wanted to quit that needed incentive to stop," Reddeck said.

Since launching the wellness program, there has been a consciousness-raising about wellness in general, Reddeck said. Some employees have set up small group competitions for weight loss. Vending machines now offer labeled healthier lunch alternatives. The company also sends out a biweekly "Wellness Wins" newsletter that includes educational pieces on health.

Additionally LiDestri holds on-site health fairs quarterly where several health-related vendors assist. At these events, confidential screenings for blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol are offered. The company also provides free healthy lunches and educational health quizzes and talks.

Through the confidential screenings, some employees have been identified as having health issues that had not been diagnosed. This meant health problems were caught at an earlier stage, Reddeck said.

"Spouses and children are invited to these health fairs to encourage a family approach to healthy lifestyles," Reddeck said.

Incentives are another big part of LiDestri's wellness program. Employees can earn up to three wellness days off a year.

"Incentives to participate in health fairs and healthy behaviors are considerable," Reddeck said.

One day is awarded when they complete the confidential health risk assessment quiz on the Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield Web site, which helps employees identify health risks and summarizes how to lower those risks.

Employees can earn two more days off by meeting two criteria from a list of about 10 choices. The list includes attending health fairs, showing gym membership, developing an individual health goal for the year, or quitting cigarette smoking.

To encourage a culture of health and fitness, LiDestri established a wellness room where there is health information and a dedicated computer to visit health and wellness Web sites. The room also has four massage chairs for relaxation.

Continued on next page



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Clive Guy works out at Guardian's recently built on-site fitness facility. The center is used an average of 530 times each week.



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Many employees of LiDestri Foods take the time to exercise by walking during their lunch break.

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The company recently built a walking path just outside the Fairport plant.

Last year 60 employees enrolled in the "Step Up" computer-based Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield program, which encourages healthy eating and monitors steps measured by pedometers. More recently the company enrolled 150 employees in the similar Rochester Business Alliance Inc.'s "eat well. live well." program.

Also the company sponsors teams for local fundraising walks, "which encourages exercise and helps us support worthwhile community causes," Reddeck said.

2007
wealth
 OF
health
 AWARDS

Small Firms
 150 employees or fewer

Canfield & Tack Inc.

In spring 2006 Canfield & Tack Inc. employees collectively lost 207 pounds in 42 days through its first "biggest loser" competition.

Over one-quarter of Canfield's 96 employees participated in the weight loss challenge, which was developed to encourage teamwork and healthy lifestyle

habits.

Six teams, including the Fat-astic Four, Seam Splitters, Four Lardos and Big CAN-fields, participated in the commercial printing company's springtime competition.

The contest was lighthearted and confidential weigh-ins reported as a team total. The team that lost the greatest percentage of its total weight won the challenge. A weekly newsletter was distributed with weekly results and recipes.

"Biggest loser" weekly postings of the team weigh-in results were eagerly awaited and commented on by all employees, not just those participating," said Ray Brown, vice president at Canfield.

Participants lost an average of 8.6 pounds each. The second "biggest loser" program was launched this year.

The company also is expanding its formal wellness programs this year to include cholesterol screening, blood pressure monitoring, a smoking cessation program and nutritionist consultations and seminars.

"Last year, excluding health insurance coverage, the company spent over \$3,700 supporting wellness programs and to encourage embedded healthy lifestyle practices," Brown said.

Another company-sponsored event last year was the "Strive for Five" program. Last fall it was launched to help create and

strengthen healthy lifestyle habits, including increased activity and healthy eating.

"It was initiated based on employee feedback to the successful 'biggest loser' program earlier in the year," Brown said.

Thirty-six percent of the employees participated in Strive for Five. They were charged \$5 and given pedometer/heart rate monitors so they could measure and record their activity levels to meet predetermined goals. Water bottles were given out to encourage proper hydration.

Throughout the course of the program healthy snacks—bowls of apples, dried fruits, yogurt, granola bars and nuts—were left in all departments for everyone, including non-participants.

The competition was based on a point system. Additional points could be earned with participation in charity walks and answering weekly trivia contests. One trivia example included thinking of as many songs as possible with the word "walk" in the title.

In Strive for Five, participants logged more than 4 million steps, ate 550 servings of vegetables, and drank 1,600 gallons of water during the 63-day course of the program.

"We are a 100 percent employee-owned corporation, and in that spirit, the employees often dictate company programs based on interest," Brown said.

"Diet, exercise and healthy eating habits are common water cooler discussion topics and these informal talks led to the idea of a group of employees looking to support each other," he said.

Two employees, Sharon Mendes and Wendy Stopinski, took the lead and created programs combining group support and fun themes. They investigated what other companies were doing and incorporated elements from the Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield StepUp program and Weight Watchers International Inc., as well as guidelines from low-fat cookbooks

and magazines.


"The company supported the programs realizing that they benefit everyone; individual health means healthier, happier, more productive employees," Brown said.

The programs also encouraged teamwork and built camaraderie. The teams were put together randomly and spanned departments, creating cross-departmental interaction.

In addition to these competitions, the company offers healthy menus at all company-sponsored corporate events, filtered water coolers throughout the plant and healthier choices in the vending machines, such as fresh salads, fruit, yogurt and nuts.

The company sponsors 15 to 20 employees each year in the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge and last year had a four-employee relay team competing in the Rochester Marathon. Employees also participate in the American Cancer Soci-

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Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Deb Guck, Ron Haeusser and Rose Cruz were Canfield & Tack's "Strive for Five" winners. The program was launched to help create and strengthen healthy lifestyle habits.

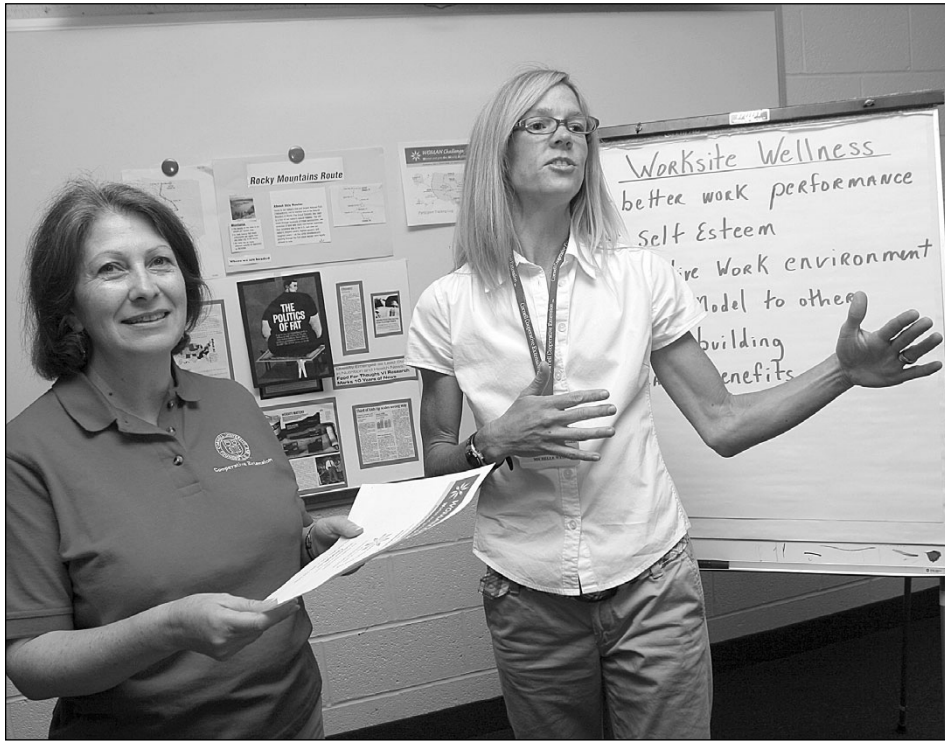


Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Cornell Cooperative Extension has incorporated a break room fruit bowl, weekly activity breaks and the occasional Friday chocolate break. The company also offers lunchtime learning seminars on various health topics.

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ety "Making Strides" and the Down syndrome "Buddy Walk" events. And there is a group of up to 10 employees called the "lunchwalkers" who walk along the river regularly.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County

Actions speak louder than words, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County knew it needed to be an example to encourage healthy lifestyles.

"Since Cornell Cooperative Extension teaches nutrition education in the community and we advocate for healthy eating, we need to practice what we preach," said Margaret O'Neill, executive director.

Over the past year Cornell Cooperative Extension has incorporated a break room fruit bowl, weekly "10 minute" activity breaks and the occasional chocolate break on Fridays "recognizing the healthy antioxidant properties of dark chocolate," O'Neill said.

These ideas and others have come from the office wellness committee that identifies and carries out healthy strategies for the entire staff of 15 full-time and eight part-time employees. Feedback has been positive and participation strong, officials say.

"Because the activities and events are fun and 'non-threatening,' staff have been positive and responsive—rather than feeling guilty if they don't make healthy choices. Everyone suggests ideas and then the committee coordinates them," O'Neill said.

With the break room fruit bowl, for example, one of the wellness committee members purchases fruit and then staff make a donation when they take a piece.

O'Neill admits filling the fruit bowl was sporadic over the winter, but she expects it to become more regular with the summer growing season.

The staff-led activity breaks once a week encourage people to take a quick walk to Highland Park or up and down the stairs if the weather is bad, O'Neill said.

Another initiative at Cornell Cooperative Extension is providing pedometers and having staff record their number of steps. To make exercising more fun they decided to turn it into a challenge. Collectively over a period of time the staff tries to walk to a certain destination on paper. They did their first challenge in early 2006.

"Our goal was to walk the distance from Rochester to Ireland in time for St. Patrick's Day. Our goal was a bit too ambitious—and we didn't get that far," O'Neill said.

In mid-May the office started a new challenge found at www.womenshealth.gov/woman/, which is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The group chose the Rocky Mountain route, which goes from Glasgow, Mont., to Carlsbad, N.M. Team members enter their daily or weekly steps for a six-week period and it is tracked on the Web site.

Over the past year, the office also has had monthly potluck lunches around a theme. In March the theme was to bring a green food and in October it was something made from apples or winter squash.

Other modifications at the office include changing vending machines to include healthful choices.

"We interviewed vending companies and selected a different company that was willing to work with us on more healthful choices," O'Neill said.

The office now has two vending machines. The beverage machine provides water and juice in addition to soda. And the snack machine provides a variety of snacks, including nuts, granola bars and healthier chip varieties.

Lunchtime learning seminars have been started where a staff member or an outside speaker shares information on a health topic. So far staff have provided lunch seminars on nutrition and healthy fats, and other speakers have covered managing health care and diabetes.

The bulletin board also features a locally grown fruit or vegetable as a food of the month, along with recipe ideas and nutritional information.

When food is provided for meetings and training, the wellness committee created guidelines for providing healthy food choices.

"As we try strategies at our own workplace and learn what works, we can be thoughtful in suggesting effective strategies around good health, whether to consumers, organizations or youth groups," O'Neill said.

The committee is encouraging all staff to take one small step toward improving healthy decisions.

"Any small change is positive," O'Neill said.

Dixon Schwabl Advertising Inc.

Dixon Schwabl Advertising Inc. strives

to create a healthy environment with fun, physical activities and even a scream room.

In designing the new headquarters facilities in 2002, Dixon Schwabl asked employees to help create an office with a "wow" factor, which was also an aesthetically pleasing and ergonomic environment.

The office includes an air hockey table, a metal slide from the second floor to the lobby, windows that employees can open for fresh air and a padded "scream room" for employees to relieve stress.

Fun is a line item in Dixon Schwabl's annual budget, and events have included paintball and air hockey tournaments, retreats to spas and visits to pumpkin patches.

The marketing communications firm has 70 full- and part-time employees and "has a strong commitment to employee health and overall well-being," CEO Lauren Dixon said.

Dixon Schwabl conducts annual bone density, cholesterol and blood pressure screenings. Another annual event is the day a massage therapist and a nutritionist with a heart-healthy catered lunch are brought in.

Cancer has brought the company closer and made staffers more health-conscious. Three Dixon Schwabl employees have had bouts with cancer and all are in remission.

"(But) their experiences with this disease have had a significant impact on the agency," Dixon said.

Those employees received full pay throughout their treatment, and the firm provided dinner each evening for six weeks and a cleaning service.

"Encouraging employees to regularly screen for diseases and educating employees about various forms of cancer and heart disease have influenced the health of Dixon Schwabl employees," she said.

Because one employee fought ovarian cancer and co-workers were inspired by her courage and strength, in 2005 the firm raised \$300 in a "dress down" day for ovarian cancer research.

Also that year Dixon co-chaired the Light the Night Walk for leukemia and lymphoma. Last year, Dixon and President Michael Schwabl co-chaired the event, which raised \$430,000 in Rochester and Buffalo. The husband and wife will co-chair this year's event.

"Dixon Schwabl encourages employ-

ees to develop healthy habits, making this a priority in and out of the office," Dixon said.

Nearly 100 employees and family members attended a company ski outing at Hunt Hollow earlier this year. The company provides employees with annual free ski passes. It also conducts an annual bocce tournament on the company front lawn. Its bowling team won its first championship last year. And the softball team is popular.

Several players who started on the softball team in 2002 had little experience with the sport, but last year the team made it to the championship.

"The marked improvement in Dixon Schwabl's athletic teams indicates a strong desire to participate in sports and focus on an active lifestyle," Dixon said.

Employees' families can participate in many agency activities, including all of the athletic teams. That helps employees build a network of supporters at home for healthy activities.

The firm also gives three-month trial memberships to the Rochester Athletic Club and subsidizes memberships after that.

In 2006 Dixon Schwabl worked with the American Heart Association to create the "We Make It Happen" award. It recognizes an individual or organization committed to women's health. The grand prize was a defibrillator.

The company also purchased a defibrillator and trained 10 employees to use it.

In 2000 a team from the agency went to Hawaii for the 26-mile Joints in Motion walk for the Arthritis Foundation. All 25 participating employees raised \$1,500, which was matched by the firm.

In addition to being involved in activities, Dixon Schwabl employees started a voluntary weight loss program—

"The Big Loser"—last year. It is designed to promote wellness without endorsing fad diets or unsafe weight loss. Money is pooled together and first- and second-place winners receive the cash as a prize. The office has had two competitions.

Winners have lost between 1.5 percent and 8.4 percent of their weight or "enough to make an intern," said Charles Benoit, Dixon Schwabl copywriter.

Lynette Haaland is a freelance writer and a former Rochester Business Journal reporter.



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Dixon Schwabl conducts an annual bocce tournament on the company front lawn. Other popular firm offerings are the bowling team, which won its first championship last year, and the softball team.